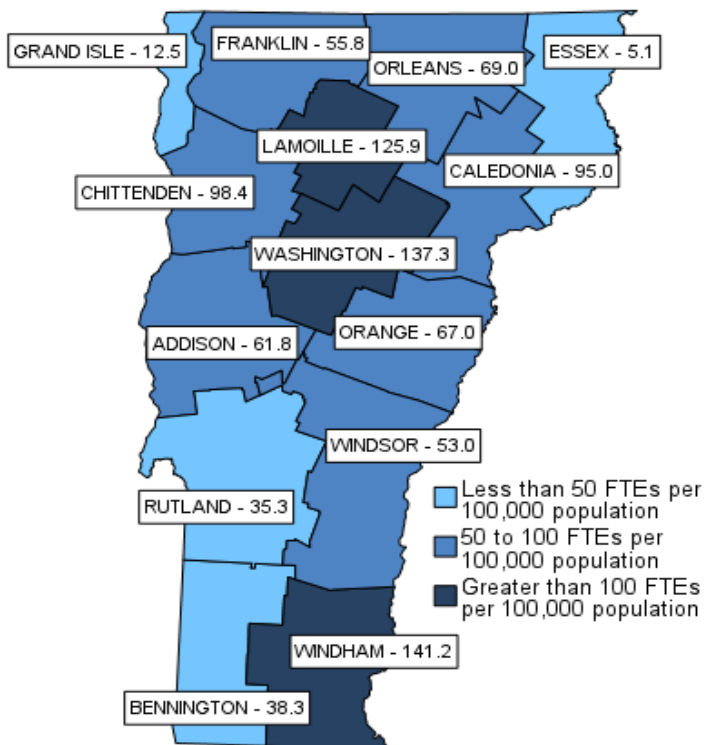


## Overview

This census of Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselors is part of the Vermont Department of Health’s healthcare provider data program, which is used to monitor and measure the supply of health care providers in Vermont over time. Vermont mental health counselors are relicensed every two years. Data for this report were obtained during the January 2021 relicensing period and represent a snapshot of the profession at that time.

Mental health counselors diagnose and treat mental conditions, psychiatric disabilities, and emotional disorders; provide professional counseling services; and promote optimal mental health to individuals, couples, families, and groups. They are part of the allied mental health professional workforce in Vermont. To be licensed in Vermont, counselors must have completed a graduate degree with specific mental health counseling focus, have two years (at least 3000 hours) of supervised practice, and pass both the National Counselor Examination and the National Clinical Mental Health Counseling Examination.

### Mental Health Counselor FTEs per 100,000 population by County



## In Brief

### Workforce

Survey period: January 2021  
 Response rate: 97.4%  
 Licenses renewed: 968  
 Active in VT: 804  
 Full-time equivalents: 547.9

### Demographics

% Female: 75.3%  
 Median age: 52  
 % 60 or older: 33.3%

### Education and Training

% PhD: 2.3%  
 % educated in VT: 53.1%  
 % educated in Northeast: 86.0%

### Main Specialties

Psychotherapy: 48.3%  
 Cognitive behavioral therapy: 16.4%  
 Trauma: 10.0%

### Current Employment

Accepting new patients: 91.5%  
 Full-time hours at main site: 26.0%  
 Plans to increase hours: 10.0%  
 Plans to reduce hours: 5.0%

### Geographic Distribution

(FTE to 100,000 population ratio)  
 Highest: 141.2, Windham County  
 Lowest: 5.1, Essex County

### Trends in Statewide FTEs

2015: 300.3  
 2017: 423.4  
 2019: 494.1  
 2021: 547.9

## Workforce

- During the 2021 census period, 968 mental health counselors (MHCs) renewed their licenses and 943 completed the workforce survey for a response rate of 97.4%. There were 25 MHCs who renewed their licenses but did not fill out the survey: normal follow-up was not completed due to competing demands of the COVID-19 pandemic response.
- Of the 943 survey respondents, 804 (85.3%) indicated that they were active and providing direct patient care in Vermont as mental health counselors.
- Of the 139 inactive survey respondents, 52 (37.4%) indicated they planned to start providing direct patient care in Vermont within the next 12 months.
- Working via telehealth was reported by 73 mental health counselors.
  - 53 (73%) of these were active primarily in Vermont and are included in this report.
  - 20 (27%) were not active or worked in multiple states and are not included in this report.
- The remainder of this report is based on the 804 mental health counselors who reported being active and providing direct patient care in Vermont.

## Demographics

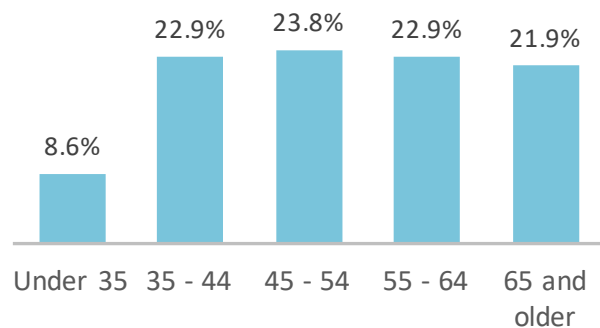
### Gender

- 75.3% of the mental health counselors in Vermont are female.
- 24.2% are male.

### Age

- 31.5% were younger than 45 years old.
- 21.9% were 65 years of age and older.

### Age Distribution of VT MHCs



### Race and Ethnicity

Respondents were asked to select their race and could select multiple responses or choose not to answer. Therefore, numbers may not equal the total number of mental health counselors.

- 758 mental health counselors are white (94.3%), 1.1% are American Indian or Alaskan Native, <0.5% are Black, Asian, or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. Six MHCs selected another race that was not listed (0.7%), and 27 preferred not to answer or were missing data for race.
- Seven mental health counselors (0.9%) are Hispanic, Latino/a, or of Spanish origin, 770 (95.8%) are not, and 27 mental health counselors preferred not to answer or were missing data for ethnicity.

# Mental Health Counselors 2021

## Education and Training

- All MHCs must have a master's degree to be licensed.
  - 18 (2.3%) had a PhD.
- Most (86.0%) completed their education in the Northeast.

Highest education level completed	Number	Percent
Vermont	413	53.1%
Northeast excluding Vermont	256	32.9%
Midwest	34	4.4%
South	32	4.1%
West	42	5.4%
Foreign Country	1	0.1%

## Additional licenses

- Many MHCs maintained more than one mental health care license.
  - 152 were substance abuse and/or addiction counselors
  - 10 were psychologists
  - 9 were psychoanalysts
  - 7 were marriage and family therapists
  - 6 were school counselors
  - 22 were art therapists

## Practice Characteristics

### Specialties

- Psychotherapy was the most common primary specialty, followed by cognitive behavioral therapy and trauma.

### Number of sites

- 11.7% (91) of mental health counselors practiced at more than one location.
- 0.9% (7) of those practiced at 3 or more locations.

### Practice Setting

- For mental health counselors' main practice location, the most common setting was individual private practices, followed by outpatient mental health clinics.

Main Setting	Number	Percent
Community health center	49	6.1%
Mental health clinic	123	15.3%
Methadone clinic	2	0.2%
Primary or specialist medical care	12	1.5%
Specialized outpatient substance use treatment facility	18	2.2%
Criminal Justice	7	0.9%
Hospital: psychiatric	10	1.2%
Private practice - individual	386	48.0%
Private practice - group	49	6.1%
Residential setting	12	1.5%
School-based mental health service	59	7.3%
In-home setting	9	1.1%
Distance Counseling	19	2.4%
Other setting	49	6.1%

## Access to Care

- 91.5% accepted new clients.
- 88.5% participated in Medicaid.
- 82.8% accepted new Medicaid clients.
- Medicare does not reimburse mental health counselors directly so MHCs accepting Medicare must be able to bill using another provider type or provide services under supervision of a covered license type.
  - 22.5% participated in Medicare.
  - 21.5% accepted new Medicare clients.

## Current Experience

### Years in Practice

- Median number of years licensed in VT: 13

### In the next 12 months

- 79.9% of MHCs planned to continue working as they had been.
- 10.0% planned to increase their hours.
- 5.0% planned to reduce their hours.
- Less than one percent (0.6%) planned to retire.

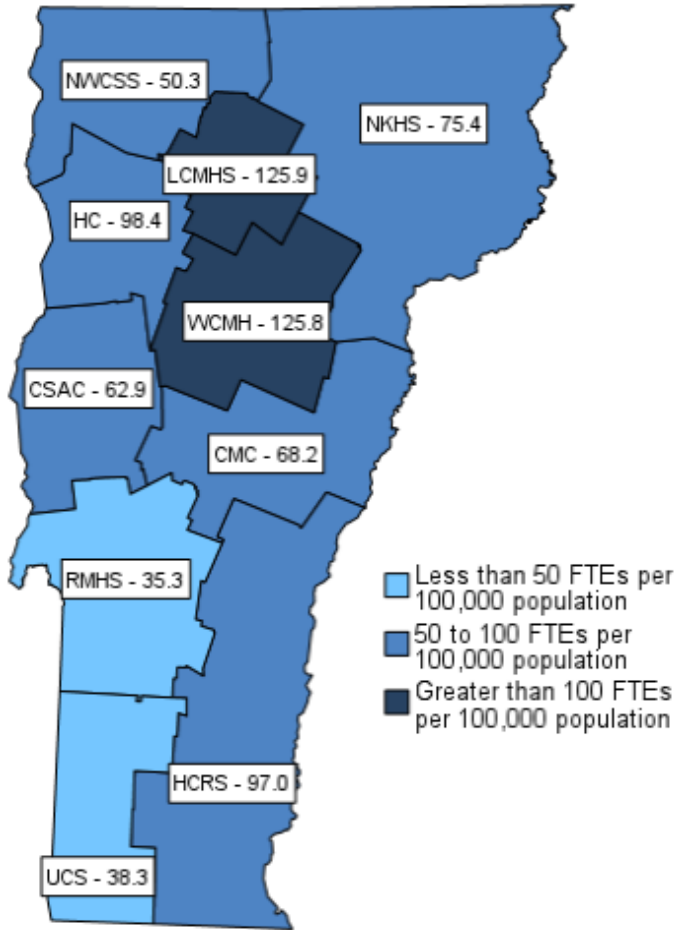
Years Licensed in Vermont	Number	Percent
0 to 5 years	195	25.1%
6 to 10 years	184	23.7%
11 to 15 years	135	17.4%
16 to 20 years	88	11.3%
21 to 25 years	87	11.2%
Over 25 years	87	11.2%

## Full Time Equivalent (FTEs)

- 26.0% worked 40 hours or more per week at their main site.
- 547.9 total FTEs were provided by 804 mental health counselors.
- 175.5 FTEs, or 32.0% of total FTEs, were age 60 and older (268 individuals).

Average weekly hours	Number	Percent
Less than 20 hours	207	25.7%
20 to 39 hours	388	48.3%
40 hours or more	209	26.0%

# Mental Health Counselors 2021



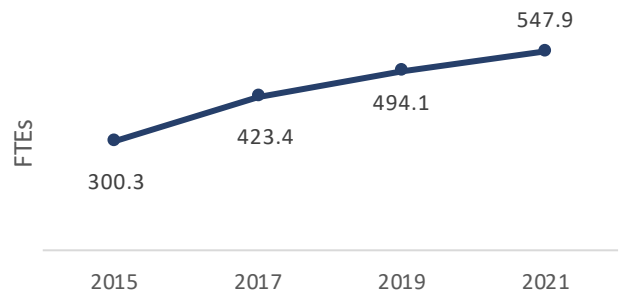
## Mental Health Catchment Areas FTEs per 100,000 population (see Appendix for details)

- Rutland Mental Health Services (RMHS) had the lowest ratio of 35.3 FTEs to 100,000 population. United Counseling Services (UCS) had a similar ratio of 38.3.
- The highest ratio was 125.9 in Lamoille County Mental Health Services (LCMHS), followed closely by 125.8 in Washington County Mental Health Services (WCMH) area.

## Trends in Statewide FTEs

- Overall, mental health counselor FTEs increased by 41.0% from 300.3 per 100,000 population in 2015 to 423.4 in 2017, and increased again by 16.8% to 494.1 from 2017 to 2019.
- From 2019 to 2021, MHC FTEs increased by 10.9%.

## Mental Health Counselors FTEs by Year



## Key Takeaways

- More than half of Vermont counties saw an increase from 2019 to 2021 in the number of FTEs per 100,000 population. The largest increase was in Lamoille County, from 105.0 in 2019 to 125.9 in 2021. The number of FTEs per 100,000 population in Franklin County decreased the most, from 61.9 to 55.8.
- Many counselors indicated a desire to serve Medicare clients, but an inability to do so due to their practice structure and Medicare's reimbursement and billing requirements.

For more information, contact: [AHS.VDHPHysicianCensus@vermont.gov](mailto:AHS.VDHPHysicianCensus@vermont.gov)

## Appendix

### Active Mental Health Counselors

A mental health counselor who reported working in Vermont as such (regardless of how many hours) is considered active. MHCs who reported that their work was done remotely out of state were considered inactive for this report.

### Census

The census was taken during the biennial mental health counselor relicensing process which ended on January 31, 2021. The data include all licensed mental health counselors except for new licensees enrolled less than three months before the renewal date (November 2018 – January 2021), as their license was valid until the next renewal date of January 31, 2023. Census questions available upon request.

### Full Time Equivalent (FTE)

Full time is defined as 40 or more working hours in Vermont per week, 48 weeks or more per year. Reporting more than 40 hours per week is defined as one FTE regardless of the number of hours over 40 per week worked.

### Main Practice, Site, Setting, and Specialty

The main practice site, setting, or specialty of an individual refer to the practice site, setting, or specialty with the greatest number of reported annual hours.

### Map Quartiles

For county map, colors define quartiles. The lowest 25% of FTE equivalents to population ratio is displayed in the lightest color, the middle 50% in medium, and highest 25% in the darkest color.

### Mental Health Catchment Areas

There are 10 designated agencies across the state of Vermont responsible for helping their local populations access mental health services among other things. When determining shortage areas for mental health care providers, the designated agency catchment areas are the dividing lines for Vermont.

Mental Health Catchment Area	Abbreviation
Clara Martin Center	CMC
Counseling Services of Addison County	CSAC
Howard Center	HC
Health Care and Rehabilitation Services of Southeastern Vermont	HCRS
Lamoille County Mental Health Services	LCMHS
Northeast Kingdom Human Services	NKHS
Northwestern Counseling and Support Services	NWCSS
Rutland Mental Health Services	RMHS
United Counseling Services	UCS
Washington County Mental Health Services	WCMH

# Mental Health Counselors 2021

## Missing data

Unless otherwise noted, missing data are excluded from tables. Thus, totals may vary from table to table.

## Population Estimates

Population estimates are for July 2021 and were provided by the Department of Health.

## States

States were grouped into the following regions:

Northeast	Midwest	South		West
Connecticut	Illinois	Alabama	North Carolina	Alaska
Maine	Indiana	Arkansas	Oklahoma	Arizona
Massachusetts	Iowa	Delaware	South Carolina	California
New Hampshire	Kansas	Florida	Tennessee	Colorado
New Jersey	Michigan	Georgia	Texas	Hawaii
New York	Minnesota	Kentucky	Virginia	Idaho
Pennsylvania	Missouri	Louisiana	Washington DC	Montana
Rhode Island	Nebraska	Maryland	West Virginia	Nevada
Vermont	North Dakota	Mississippi		New Mexico
	Ohio			Oregon
	South Dakota			Utah
	Wisconsin			Washington
				Wyoming

## Weekly Hours

Average weekly hours are based on hours and weeks reported, adjusted to a full-time 48-week working year (hours \* (weeks/48)). Thus, the average weekly hours for an individual working 40 hours a week for half the year (24 weeks) is 20.